

## Interview Checklist for Postdoctoral Fellows and Supervisors

Building a good postdoctoral-supervisor relation is essential for a successful outcome, and this guide has been developed with the aid of successful supervisors and postdocs. Supervisors typically have postdoc candidates give presentations on their past research, and sometimes on a paper of the supervisor's choice. Where possible, supervisors will bring candidates to meet their research group, and often interviews will include other collaborators of the supervisor or their research manager. Interviews typically are 1-1.5 hours long. PIs want to see the problem solving abilities of the postdocs, and may ask questions that are similar to questions asked by external examiners at a PhD defense. Postdocs who have doctoral work to complete will need to find their own time for this, and the more undone work from previous positions, the less appealing a candidate becomes. Contracts were typically for one year with options to renew until the end of the grant if the work was progressing as expected. We hope this checklist will help you prepare for an enriching and productive period of your research career.

### Collaboration

- Why do you want to work in this research area and what do you want/can you contribute to the field?
- What are the potential projects that would have support?
- Will the scope of the research be defined by a grant, industry partner, or external agency?
- How much will the advisor or the post-doc determine the research program?
- Do you have a research contingency plan?
- What potential collaborations would be possible?
- How will the PDF's prior training help advance the research?
- If the research is outside of the current area of expertise of the PI or PDF, is there still interest and confidence in doing the project?
- When the fellowship ends, would the work continue collaboratively, would the project go with the postdoc, or will the project stay with the PI?
- Is this a team project? How is authorship typically determined in your research group?
- Who owns the Intellectual Property?
- What are the common journals you are targeting for submission?

### Postdoc to provide to Supervisor

- Examples of writing/language competency
- Provide current CV
- Contact information for references
- Written references

### Expectations and Performance

- What are the advisor's expectations (work style) of the post-doc? (teamwork, work hours, papers, supervision, work ethic...)
- What does the postdoc hope to gain from the fellowship experience?
- Exactly what skills/techniques do you have? What skills/knowledge will you bring to the PI's group?
- How quickly does the postdoc learn new techniques, concepts?
- How are problems typically dealt with? Can you give an example?
- Will the supervisor be taking a sabbatical or going into the field? How will this impact the fellowship?
- How do you gauge postdoc performance?
- If the supervisor is dissatisfied about the progress of the project or postdoc performance, how is this handled?
- Will the supervisor provide contact information from current and previous postdocs?

### **Funding**

- How long is financial support guaranteed? Is there potential to renew and if so, under what circumstances?
- Will the supervisor have adequate research funds to support the proposed research?
- What are the expectations for the postdoc to apply for funding/scholarships?

### **Career**

- What are the top goals the postdoc hopes to achieve during his/her postdoctoral experience?
- Does the supervisor approve of postdocs investing time in writing fellowships and attending meetings/ seminars that will promote their careers?
- How many post-docs has this supervisor supported and where are they now?
- What is the supervisor's motivation in doing research and in what ways has he/she invested in promoting the career of the postdoc?
- Is a work-life balance essential/ important and how has the supervisor achieved it.
- Will the supervisor have time for mentoring (both research and career mentoring)?
- What process is used to track professional development? What are the fellowship requirements?

### **Research Group**

- How many others (graduate students, staff, postdocs) currently work for this advisor?
- What type of research support can be expected (lab technologists, librarian, facility staff)?
- Who is responsible for general ordering and maintenance of equipment in the lab?
- Does the postdoc have any experience supervising students / technical staff?
- Does the supervisor assist in troubleshooting experiments?
- If the postdoc does not have much experience in \_\_\_\_\_, what steps can be taken?
- Has there ever been conflict in your research group and how was it handled?

### **Research and Professional Activities**

- Which technical skills can the postdoc learn?
- Will the postdoc be involved in grant writing?
- What opportunity will the postdoc have to review manuscripts?
- Is there funding available to present at conferences?
- How many conferences would I have an opportunity to attend?
- Are there other training opportunities for postdocs?
- What opportunity will the postdoc have to mentor students?
- What is the likelihood of an opportunity to teach?
- Are there training opportunities for teaching?

### **Research Preparation**

- Are there mandatory or safety training programs required before research can commence?
- Does the research need ethics approval or updating?
- How can I get orientation to the library system?
- What is the work alone policy?
- Are there fieldwork considerations (training, visas)?

### **Comments/Notes**